

## GENERAL RULES AND CRITERIA

### GRANT PROGRAMMES FOR INDIVIDUALS AND LEGAL ENTITIES

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#### 1. Introduction

These grant guidelines establish the rules which govern the administration of the Grant Programmes of Journalismfund Europe for teams of individuals and/or legal entities, including the application, eligibility, selection processes and the assessment criteria that will be used to select grantees.

You and the named participants must read these grant guidelines before filling out an application.

#### 2. Objectives and philosophy

The aim of the Grant Programmes of Journalismfund Europe is facilitating independent cross-border investigative journalism by connecting donors and journalists in order to promote democracy in Europe, without endangering the journalists' independence.

The project will be one that, in principle, could not be realised within the remit of regular journalism – a project of great newsworthiness and depth that is simultaneously original, innovative and time-consuming.

The grants are completely independent from commercial interests. Financing comes from different sources and for the most part from several international foundations and the Flemish government. Journalismfund safeguards the independence of the grantees from the donors and also guarantees that the grants are completely unrelated to political influence. Journalismfund's fundraising is conducted according to the following key principles: full transparency, independence and no editorial interference. (Representatives from) donors can never be part of the juries that award the grants. Journalismfund Europe does not take money from donors that don't agree with these terms. For more information about our funding policy, we refer to our [Ethical Funding Policy](#).

Journalismfund Europe is assisted by an International Advisory Board. The International Advisory Board, together with Journalismfund, ensures that the grant initiatives contribute to the facilitation of independent investigative journalism in Europe and beyond.

#### 3. Call for proposals

Depending on the Grant Programmes there are several evaluations per year. The call for proposals of each Grant Programme and the deadlines are communicated via our website and social media channels.

#### **4. Grant amount and grant period**

The amounts of the grants are not fixed. They depend on the topics, the number of team members and the duration of the project as well as on the total budget available for the specific Grant Programme.

Project deadlines are dependent on the Grant Programme and will be agreed upon in the grant agreement(s).

#### **5. Eligibility criteria**

Only natural persons and for some Grant Programmes also incorporated legal entities are eligible for a grant. Depending on the Grant Programme restrictions can be made based on the residency of the applicant(s).

The applicant(s) must be working as professional journalists (natural persons) or be professional news outlets (legal entities). References from individuals (editors, publishers, journalists, professors) and/or references to earlier work are essential. Journalismfund Europe reserves the right to contact references (while respecting the confidentiality of the proposal).

Students are not eligible in all Grant Programmes.

Journalists who were previously allocated a Journalismfund grant can reapply, but the jury can include the result of previous grants in their evaluation of the new application.

The applicant(s) must demonstrate convincingly that the project would be unrealisable without a grant. In other words, the reason why the applicant is appealing to Journalismfund Europe should be explained.

The applicant(s) should be able to demonstrate the feasibility of the project. A basic commitment in the form of a 'Letter of Intent' to publish the product from a news editor is one of the conditions<sup>1</sup> to obtain a grant.

#### **6. What the grant money can be used for**

Grants can cover working time and direct investigations expenses such as travel, visa, accommodation, translation, fixers, access to pay-databases, FOI requests, legal screening, etc.

Only freelance journalists and legal entities (news outlets) can apply for a grant to cover working time. For some Grant Programmes (see the respective Grant Details) employed staff journalists can apply for a working grant if they can provide a reason and prove that they are not receiving any wages for their working time on this project.

Following expenses cannot be covered by the grants: investments goods (such as IT equipment, mobile phones, software, ...), production costs, food and beverage, per diems, etc.

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<sup>1</sup> Except for starters in the Grant Programme "Fonds Pascal Decroos".

For some Grant Programmes (see the respective Grant Details) also Development and Support Costs are eligible, if they have a clear and direct benefit for the specific investigation:

- Costs covering team members' participation in trainings and conferences, to gain or strengthen skills needed for the investigation and/or to meet experts and colleagues to discuss their supported research.
- Costs for technology or development of tools necessary for the investigation (e.g. datasets, satellite imagery, ... - NO hardware).

## 7. The assessment criteria

The assessment criteria are determined in function of the purpose of the Grant Programme. The jury will decide on journalistic criteria, such as added value, relevance in society, originality, feasibility, and experience. The assessment criteria are available on the application website of the respective Grant Programmes.

## 8. How to apply

All applications are submitted online via the application portal of the Grant Programme. Journalismfund will acknowledge receipt of the application.

The applications need to include the following information:

- Details of all the applying team members (natural persons and/or legal entities)
- Description of the project, both content and method;
- Timing, including when the publications of the supported investigation are expected;
- Budget, including statement of other sources of financing, according to the budget template available on the application portal;
- Written commitments from other donors (if any);
- An editor's written commitment to publish (Letter(s) of Intent);
- For natural persons: Scan of the passport (natural persons)
- For legal entities:
  - Articles of incorporation;
  - Most recent annual financial statements (balance sheet and profit & loss account);
  - List of board members;
  - List of the companies/organisations and/or natural persons holding capital or shares in the legal entity (if applicable).

Additional documents and information may be requested by Journalismfund Europe. Application documents must be written in English<sup>2</sup> and budgets expressed in EUR.

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<sup>2</sup> For the Grant Programmes financed by the Flemish Government application documents should preferably be written in Dutch.  
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## 9. Pre-application advice

The applications should be very well prepared and meet all eligibility criteria. Journalismfund Europe will respond to all questions the applicant(s) might have with regard to the preparation of the application. In this respect, the applicant(s) should contact the project coordinator in a timely manner. Specific practicalities in that regard are mentioned on the application website of the Grant Programmes. However, the assistance provided by the project coordinator does not guarantee a positive evaluation of the project. Applicants remain fully responsible for the content of their application. Decisions are made independently by the jury.

## 10. The grant selection process

Journalismfund Europe verifies the eligibility of the application(s) and the completion of the formalities. If not all information is provided or if some information is unclear, Journalismfund can request additional input from the applicant(s). Applications that do not meet the basic requirements will not be transmitted to the jury. Applications can also be declined if the budgeted amounts are not credible or if the amounts are exaggerated.

All Journalismfund's Grant Programmes work with independent and anonymous juries that decide autonomously about the allocation of the grant budgets.

The jury members are experienced personalities knowledgeable in the field of journalism and media. They are appointed by the management of Journalismfund Europe on the basis of a list of names presented to the board members. A jury member can be on the jury for the duration of the Grant Programme with a maximum of four consecutive years. The names of the jury members are made public once they step out of the jury.

The applications are evaluated by each jury member separately on the basis of the assessment criteria of the Grant Programme. Based on their assessment of each application and in function of the available budget, each jury member recommends an amount to be allocated to each application. Before the jury meeting, the jury members send their assessments recommendations to the project coordinator.

During the jury meeting and on the basis of the individual assessments, the jury members reach a consensus regarding the allocation of the grants and the distribution of the available budget. A representative of Journalismfund acts as secretary. Journalismfund's staff members have no influence on the decisions regarding the allocation of the grants or the budget distribution. In case of equal votes, the chairman of the jury meeting decides.

If required, the jury and/or Journalismfund Europe can request additional information from the applicant(s) regarding the project.

Reapplications are allowed after approval by the jury and provided that the new application takes into account the jury's remarks/suggestions.

The list of names of the journalists and legal entities who are allocated a grant is presented to the board of directors of Journalismfund for ratification together with the grant amounts. For each

grant, the share of expenses and of working grants are specified. The specific investigation topic is not reported to the board of directors as long as the project has not been published.

## **11. Notification of application outcomes**

The applicant(s) receive notification by email of the result of the evaluation of their application approximately six weeks after the submission deadline.

## **12. Successful grant applications**

After the notification by email an appointment will be made with the successful applicant(s) in order to finetune all details and to draw up the grant agreement(s) specifying the terms and conditions.

Journalismfund Europe will enter into a separate grant agreement with each applicant in the team. This grant agreement will specify the amount of the working grant and the amount of expenses that will be disbursed to the applicant. The grant money will be transferred on the bank accounts of the different applicants.

The applicants making up the team are jointly responsible for the project execution and the spending of the grant money.

It is the policy of Journalismfund to pay the two thirds of approved grants to successful applicant(s) after signature of the grant agreement(s) by all project applicants. The balance of the grants will be paid on evidence of publications of a finished project in accordance with the original proposal and after having received all the financial report(s) including the original supporting documents as well as other information enabling the disclosure of the project on Journalismfund's website. The grant agreement(s) include a list of the information/documents that should be provided in this respect.

For reasons of transparency, a credit should be included in the media that publish the project. Mention should be made of the support of Journalismfund. The exact formulation and instructions will be specified in the grant agreement(s).

The payment of the balance of the grant(s) is not guaranteed if no credit(s) are included in the media.

## **13. How we monitor your grant activity**

Grantees commit to report to Journalismfund Europe on the progress of the project.

The timing and instructions regarding these reports are specified in the grant agreement(s).

If required Journalismfund can assist the grantees in disseminating their journalistic product to maximise outreach and possible impact. Also Journalismfund will make sure the story is spread widely via its networks. Grantees therefore commit to contact the Grant Programme project coordinator at least two weeks before the publication in order to plan and discuss the joint

communication strategy. Specific instructions in this respect can be found in the document 'Run-up to publication' that will be provided to the grantees after signing of the grant agreement(s).

The supported investigations will be included on the website of Journalismfund with the name and a short bio of the team members, the amount of the grant, a link to the publications and a synopsis of the investigation. Grantees can ask not to disclose their name on the website of Journalismfund Europe if this is justified for security reasons or by any other valid cause. The non-disclosure will be discussed and decided by mutual agreement between the grantee and Journalismfund.

## 14. Other considerations

- Both Journalismfund and the jury members are bound to strict confidentiality - before, during and after evaluation of the applications.
- All applicants/persons involved in the project have to endorse the principles of the Global Charter of Ethics for Journalists as well as the national codes of ethics that are in force (see <https://www.ifj.org/who/rules-and-policy/global-charter-of-ethics-for-journalists.html>).
- The applicants should inform Journalismfund about any significant legal claims (including any notice of intention to take legal action) of any kind made against them that might impact the project.
- The role of Journalismfund in assisting journalists is limited to making grants. Journalismfund assumes no liability for the legal and/or safety risks undertaken by journalists in the course of their reporting. Journalismfund will have no influence on the content, presentation or editorial process of the project and may in no way be held liable for the content of the supported project. Also, the grantee(s) and the editor(s) of the publication(s) will be responsible for the legal screening before publication.
- A conflict of interests occurs when a member of the board, a jury or a staff member has a personal interest in a certain decision. Personal interest includes direct interests, as well as those of family, friends, or other organisations a person may be involved with or have an interest in. A conflict of interest may be actual, potential or perceived and may be financial or non-financial.
- All jury members will be required to commit to the highest ethical and professional standards and reject any effort to influence their decisions. Jury members will act independently from all donors. Any attempt by any donor to interfere in the decisions of the jury will be immediately reported to the rest of the jury. Jury members will be required to declare any possible conflicts of interest, and will be asked to recuse themselves on any judgment where such conflicts may interfere with independence or the public perception of independence. These recusals will be recorded.
- Personnel of Journalismfund facing any conflict of interest whatsoever in connection with an application/applicant(s) will report this to his/her direct supervisory body and will refrain to



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give any advice or assistance with regard to the application/applicant(s) at hand.

- Applicants formerly member of the jury or employed by Journalismfund should respect a cooling off period of at least two years.
- Journalismfund is committed to storing and handling all personal information provided in the applications with the utmost care. The data provided to Journalismfund will only be used for the specific purpose of the grant application. Data will not be passed on to third parties other than the jury members without permission of the grantee(s) unless Journalismfund is obliged to do so for legal and/or fiscal reasons. Grantee(s) have the right to request a copy of all personal data that Journalismfund holds and to rectify the data if necessary.

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